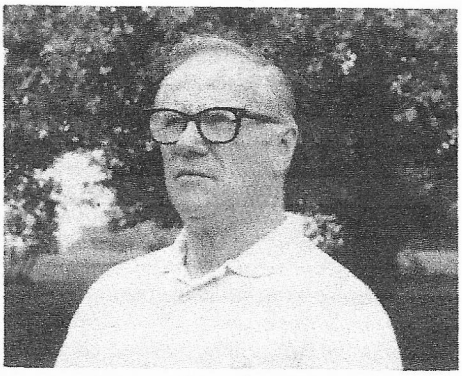
MASTER MODEL RAILROADERS

by Bill Ehlert, MMR



Dean Freytag

MASTER MODEL RAILROADER #153 DEAN A. FREYTAG

Dean A. Freytag, 65, is MMR #153 and lives in Ashland, Ohio, with his wife, Ann. Like so many of our brethren the "bug" to railroad came at an early age. Fifty-plus years ago, he drove his grandfather, a real estate agent on his rounds, and while Granpaw sold, Dean sat and read RAILROAD MAN'S MAGAZINE and looked at model railroad product catalogs. He always remembers the catalog that featured a pack of Camel cigarets to show the relative size of the HO passenger cars.

Lionel's MODEL BUILDER MAGAZINE was required reading in the late '30's. Dean's mother always wondered why her broom didn't seem quite right, and Dean says that he never did get up the courage to tell her that he had cut off enough for his first scratchbuilt tank car that road on tinplate trucks.

Dean was graduated from high school in 1942 and enlisted in the U.S. Army, served in the South Pacific, and was discharged a sergeant. He retired as a major in the Corp of Engineers in 1964. After the war, the hardware store where his wife, Ann, worked carried a small supply of Varney HO. The *Little Joe* Ann gave him for Christmas in 1947 is still spotted alongside the enginehouse. Another conversation item is the paper-sided reefer from an "I like Varney because" contest.

Dean spent 35 years in the consumer finance industry with the last half being in supervision in what was referred to at one time as the "Ruhr of America." The large locomotives, big trains, and towering buildings definitely steered him toward today's modeling.

Dean's present layout, the South Ridge Lines, with a strong Norfolk & Western influence, was started in 1961. It is a big 13′ x 38′ railroad with a large fiddle yard in another part of the basement. Dean believes in interchanges and view blocks. He feels that structures should dominate the layout, not the other way around. The massive buildings scattered throughout his Davis Steel Corporation (Sultana Works) bears out this concept. These structures, coupled with the different rolling stock indigenous only to this type of industry, make South Ridge Lines a unique railroad.

The late Karl Parshall, when he was national contest chairman, was Dean's mentor. Karl was a good teacher, and Dean feels that the guidelines Karl laid down have made the national contest department what it is today. Progress has been steady, but in the past few years it has really blossomed with the number of NMRA contests at an all-time high, while the number of special sponsors has more than tripled. Dean is quick to point out that this success has been a team effort, with loyal, long-term chairpeople filling every key position.

One of Dean's favorite expressions is, "He who claims no ego, is a hypocrite," and readily admits that it is not his case. He is proud of his personal accomplishments, and he is proud of what he has done for the hobby.

On the other hand, he is not particularly proud that his first AP certificate for Structures is dated November 1963, and the last one for Electrical, 1989. In between, came Official, Cars, Volunteer, Scenery, and Author. A quarter of a century to finish is a record.

In his 30-plus years of activity, there have been literally hundreds who have assisted him to achieve a modicum of success. Dean says the list is too long to name individuals, but he wants all to know that he is deeply appreciative of all the kindness shown to him and Ann.